

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Availability of the Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Coastal Resiliency in Alabama, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands FEMA

Notification is hereby given to the public of the intent of the Department of Homeland Security-Federal Emergency Management Agency (DHS-FEMA) to provide federal financial assistance for projects within the States of Alabama and Florida, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Territory of the United States Virgin Islands, and federally recognized Tribal Nations to promote coastal living marine resource (LMR) resiliency as mitigation for the effects of storm surge. FEMA makes federal assistance available to state, local, tribal, and territorial governments and certain private nonprofit entities under a variety of grant programs. States and territorial partners are typically recipients and local partners are typically subrecipients of FEMA's grants; Tribal Nations may be either recipients or subrecipients of FEMA grants.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) has been prepared to assess impacts to the human environment from actions related to meeting purpose and need of the PEA undertaken by FEMA grant recipients or subrecipients within Alabama, Florida, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands. FEMA evaluated two scenarios in the PEA; a no action alternative, evaluated as a baseline, and a preferred alternative, evaluated as a range of potential actions to promote the ecosystem services provided by coastal LMR in mitigating for storm surge. The range of actions collectively identified as the preferred alternative includes creating or restoring reef relief or structure through the transplant and re-attachment of coral fragments, reef rubble, or coral reef substrate as attachments sites for corals, propagation of coral fragments in onshore or offshore nurseries, planting, transplanting, or seeding of mangrove propagules and submerged aquatic vegetation in nearshore or subtidal habitats. DHS-FEMA's requirement of addressing floodplain management and wetlands protection in accordance with 44 CFR Part 9 is incorporated within the PEA.

The PEA is available for public comment on FEMA's website starting July 24, 2023 at <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/environmental-historic/nepa/programmatic-environmental-30>. Written comments may be submitted by mail or email. Written comments may be mailed to Department of Homeland Security, FEMA Region 2, Attn: Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation, 26 Federal Plaza, New York, NY, 10278. Emailed comments including Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands may be emailed to FEMAR2COMMENT@fema.dhs.gov. Comments specific to Florida may be emailed to FEMA-R4EHP-FLORIDA@fema.dhs.gov, and comments specific to Alabama may be emailed to FEMA-R4EHP@fema.dhs.gov.

The comment period will end 30 days from the publication date of this public notice. If no substantive comments are received, the PEA will be adopted as final with a signed Finding of No Significant Impact. FEMA will address any substantive comments as part of the FONSI or consider appropriate next steps which may include a revised PEA or withdrawal.